

the consciousness that there is, underlying all this perplexing and humiliating diversity, an essential oneness of spirit and desire, out of which spring occasional indications of oneness that are visible. And I do not know any aspect in which the Christian Church universal so really appears to be one in sentiment, aim and honest effort as in its noble work through the Bible Society. In this organization, at least, we have to thank God the Church does appear to be the one angel, one heavenly messenger carrying to all mankind one heavenly message. By means of this honoured organization, the Presbyterian and the Methodist, the Episcopalian and the Baptist, hand out one and the same volume, and they hand it out to every person under heaven as the very best gift they can bestow; and, when the person receiving it opens it he finds much about God and eternity, much about the soul and its sins, about Christ and His salvation, but not a syllable about denominations. In this God-like effort alone all Christians stand before the whole world in perfect catholic unity, one "angel," one mighty messenger of grace, bearing heaven's glad tidings to the ignorant, sinning and perishing human family. In the language in which the apostolic pen wrote the original of our text, there is a wonderful unity of idea expressed, the words "angel," "gospel," and "preach" being all derivatives of the same Greek root—making the sentence run thus: "A mighty *angel* having the everlasting *evangel* to *evangelize* them that dwell on the earth."

Our text having shown us what the Church ought to be—one angel, shows us also what the Church should *do*—evangelize the world with the everlasting evangel.

With these remarks on the *general aspect* of the passage before us, permit me now to attempt a short analysis of it.

In this apocalyptic picture, we have—

#### I. THE COMMISSION, PLACE, AND WORK OF THE ONE GREAT CHRISTIAN AGENCY—THE LIVING CHURCH OF CHRIST.

(1.) *The Commission* authorising the Church's action is apparent in the name "Angel," a name suggesting at once the idea of a messenger appointed by the Most High Himself, with a special message to mankind. Angels do not act on their own responsibility and of their own accord; the name, therefore, excludes all idea of one going or working on his own authority. As God Almighty alone can commission holy angels, so He alone can commission the Church; the Church is composed of those "called out" by God, such being the meaning of the original word; every believer, being a living member of the Christ-Body, has been necessarily "called out" to the active ministry of the Christ-Truth in some way; every Christian, being by regeneration ready for heaven, and heaven being ready for him, there can be but one conceivable reason why he should abide in this world of sin—to be a witness for God, a messenger of mercy, a minister of grace amongst the lost. Few Christians are "called" to, or fitted for ecclesiastical office, few for the work of preaching and teaching publicly, but every one is called to *evangelize* somehow and *somewhere*; while there be men specially qualified for and commissioned to the official work of the overseer and teacher, the bishop and deacon, *all* Christians are called with "an holy calling," *all* Christians constitute the "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar (purchased) people," whose use is to "shew forth the praises (virtues) of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light;" to *all* believers this great commission applies, "The Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come," for the gracious call of God in the heart is the real call to gospel ministry; the poor woman of Samaria, telling her story to the men in the streets of Sychar, as really as Peter standing in the court of the temple delivering his apostolic message to Jerusalem sinners, on the day of Pentecost, is part of the "mighty angel."

(2.) *As to the Place* of the Church in her works it is, saith our text, "in the midst of heaven,"—an expression which I take to teach that the